

Notice of a public

Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods

To: Councillor Lisle (Executive Member)

Date: Monday, 20 November 2017

Time: 4.00 pm

Venue: The King Richard III Room (GO49) - West Offices

AGENDA

Notice to Members – Post Decision Calling In:

Members are reminded that, should they wish to call in any item* on this agenda, notice must be given to Democracy Support Group by **4:00pm on Wednesday 22 November 2017**

*With the exception of matters that have been the subject of a previous call in, require Full Council approval or are urgent which are not subject to the call-in provisions. Any called in items will be considered by the Customer and Corporate Services Scrutiny Management Committee (Calling In)

Written representations in respect of items on this agenda should be submitted to Democratic Services by **5.00pm on Thursday 16 November 2017**.

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member is asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which he may have in respect of business on this agenda.

- 2. Minutes** (Pages 1 - 2)
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2017.

- 3. Public Participation**
At this point in the meeting, members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. The deadline for registering is **5.00pm on Friday 17 November 2017**. Members of the public can speak on agenda items or matters within the Executive Member's remit.

To register to speak please contact the Democracy Officers for the meeting, on the details at the foot of the agenda.

Filming, Recording or Webcasting Meetings

Please note that, subject to available resources, this meeting will be filmed and webcast, or recorded, including any registered public speakers who have given their permission. The broadcast can be viewed at <http://www.york.gov.uk/webcasts> or, if recorded, this will be uploaded onto the Council's website following the meeting.

Residents are welcome to photograph, film or record Councillors and Officers at all meetings open to the press and public. This includes the use of social media reporting, i.e. tweeting. Anyone wishing to film, record or take photos at any public meeting should contact the Democracy Officers (contact details are at the foot of this agenda) in advance of the meeting.

The Council's protocol on Webcasting, Filming & Recording of Meetings ensures that these practices are carried out in a manner both respectful to the conduct of the meeting and all those present. It can be viewed at

https://www.york.gov.uk/downloads/file/11406/protocol_for_webcasting_film_and_recording_of_council_meetings_20160809

**4. Garden Assistance Scheme Procurement / (Pages 3 - 24)
Budget Saving**

The report requests approval to take part of the budget for this scheme as a saving on the Housing Revenue Account which is facilitated by the service being procured as part of the Handyperson Scheme via Adult Social Care commissioning.

5. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Executive Member considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer:

Catherine Clarke and Louise Cook (job share)

Contact details:

- Telephone – (01904) 551031
- Email catherine.clarke@york.gov.uk and louise.cook@york.gov.uk

(If contacting by email, please send to both Democracy Officers named above).

For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
- Business of the meeting
- Any special arrangements
- Copies of reports and
- For receiving reports in other formats

Contact details are set out above.

This information can be provided in your own language.

我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

**Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim
własnym języku. (Polish)**

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 (01904) 551550

City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods
Date	16 October 2017
Present	Councillor Lisle (Executive Member)

20. Declarations of Interest

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which he had in the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

21. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meetings held on 14 August 2017 and 18 September 2017 be approved and signed as correct records.

22. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation scheme.

23. Introduction of Civil Penalty Notices for Housing Act Offences

The Executive Member considered a report which sought approval for a policy to enable the Council to implement new powers on civil penalties introduced by the Housing and Planning Act 2016. These would be for offences under the Housing Act 2004 and would be an alternative to prosecution. The policy would bring the Council's powers in line with national guidance, would only apply to offences committed after April 2017 and would require the same standard of proof as a criminal prosecution. The proposed policy covered the Council's approach to implementation and the method for calculating the value of penalties, to a maximum value of £30k.

The use of civil penalties would be quicker than prosecution, and would be decided by a panel with specific knowledge and experience of housing matters. Penalty receipts would be invested by the local authority in the private housing sector, and the policy would evidence the Council's commitment to tackling the worst elements of landlord behaviour in the private rented sector.

Option 1 (to introduce civil penalties) was recommended. Not to do so (Option 2) would mean the loss of an additional tool to improve the lives of people living in private rented accommodation and ensure that private landlords did not benefit from ignoring their obligations.

- Resolved: (i) That Option 1 be approved and that civil penalties be introduced as an alternative to prosecution.
- (ii) That the policy attached as Appendix A to the report be approved and adopted.

Reason: To enable the Council to use the civil penalties as an alternative to prosecution for specific penalties under the Housing Act 2004.

Cllr S Lisle, Executive Member

[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 4.13 pm].



**Decision Session: Executive Member for
Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods**

20 November 2017

Report of the Assistant Director, Housing and Community Safety

Garden Assistance Scheme Procurement / Budget Saving**Summary**

1. The report requests approval to take part of the budget for this scheme as a saving on the Housing Revenue Account which is facilitated by the service being procured as part of the Handyperson Scheme via Adult Social Care commissioning.

Recommendations

2. The Executive Member is asked to consider:
 - 1) Procuring a grass and hedge cutting service as part of a tenure blind Handyperson Scheme to realise a saving of £46,000 on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to contribute to overall savings of £1.5 million.

Reason: Consultation suggests that over half of customers receiving this service are not prepared to pay for it and this proposal delivers a similar service for most existing customers at no cost to them.

Background

3. The HRA requires savings of £1.5m to be realised over the financial years up to 2019 / 2020. Potential savings have been identified across staffing and service budgets. The original saving of £96k proposed by ending the Garden Assistance Scheme (GAS) in its current form was earmarked for 2017 / 2018 but it was felt that removing the scheme completely would have a big impact on customers. Other ways of delivering the service whilst delivering the savings have been sought but no other substantive solution has been discovered.

The GAS helps older and disabled customers with the upkeep of their gardens through periodic grass cuts (7) and hedge cuts (2). The service is not a full gardening service although one off work to bring gardens to a manageable state when customers join the scheme are made as part of the overall scheme.

Customers are expected to do complementary work on their gardens where they have planted areas and to keep on top of their garden between cuts.

409 tenants received the service in 2016. 365 received the service in 2017 following a tightening of the criteria for qualification. No means testing was applied.

The current criteria to qualify for the scheme is that the customer is over 70 and / or disabled (registered disabled or receiving a disability related benefit) and has nobody living with them that could do garden work for them.

Prior to the need to make savings the intention was to further review the scheme criteria, in particular the age threshold.

The service has been provided by procuring external contractors for grass and hedge cuts as well as a rate for one off garden works. The current contractor indicated that an arrangement where they offered a paid for service and charged customers directly on a one off or ongoing basis would not be acceptable to them given the additional costs and resources this would incur.

There is no desire to charge internally for a garden assistance service given the additional costs this would incur and resources this would require.

We have looked at the potential for volunteer opportunities, local initiatives or a paid for by customers scheme to replace the GAS but we have not been able to put anything concrete in place at this stage. We will look to develop these with colleagues across the council including ward teams in the future

Consultation

4. A customer consultation exercise was undertaken in 2016. See annex A for a summary of results.

Customers were asked if they were prepared to pay £2.25 per week / £117 per year which would cover the costs of grass and hedge cuts at the rates included in the most recent contract. If they were not prepared to pay this they were asked what they would be prepared to pay.

Nearly 50% of customers responded by various means.

44% indicated that they would pay the amount to cover costs.

56% indicated that they would not pay this amount. 57% of these were not prepared to pay anything and the rest indicated they were prepared to pay varying amounts as detailed in Annex A.

Anecdotally, many customers indicated that they could find somebody to help with their garden.

Age Concern were asked for their opinion on the removal of the scheme and the response was one of understanding in the face of a difficult financial environment for housing and wider council services.

Options

5. A: Ending the Garden Assistance scheme to realise a required saving of £96,000 on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) to contribute to overall savings of £1.5 million. Develop other options for customers unable to find other means to manage their gardens in the longer term.

B: Procuring a grass and hedge cutting service as part of the wider Handyperson Service to deliver savings of £46,000 whilst providing a similar service for customers on benefits and those allowed on to the scheme on a discretionary basis. Develop other options for customers unable to find other means to manage their gardens in the longer term who don't qualify.

C: Procure the GAS service as is.

Analysis

6. Option A:

The decision to accept this saving would contribute to the overall savings target on the Housing Revenue Account without further

affecting core housing services. Options to help customers manage their gardens by other means could be explored and could potentially contribute to other objectives including reducing social isolation, encouraging volunteering opportunities and providing opportunities for social enterprise.

Option B:

In seeking solutions to providing a GAS service whilst delivering savings conversations with colleagues lead to us to developing this proposal.

Adult Services have historically procured a handy person scheme. See details in Annex B. Yorkshire Housing currently have the contract for this but this runs out March 2018 and procurement will be needed to provide the service in future.

There are obvious benefits in linking the delivery of GAS to the Handyperson scheme given the intended outcomes of that scheme.

The scheme currently involves grass and hedge cuts in the full specification. The service is means tested and available to those on benefits. The service is tenure blind. One off garden works to get the garden 'cut ready' are carried out by volunteers

We can write the specification to extend this element of the service and transfer qualifying customers from the Housing Services scheme across. They would get 7 grass cuts and 1 hedge cut. It would also include edge trimming, weed killing on hard services and clearing of cuttings from paths. On the current list it is estimated that 306 will qualify following means testing

The organisation delivering the contract would assess customers for eligibility reducing administration for Housing Services. There would be a requirement to ensure up to 306 Housing Customers received the service and any above this number would join a waiting list. Monitoring information would be required and provided quarterly

The cost to the Housing Revenue Account would be £50k representing a saving of £46k to contribute to overall saving. The £50k would include a contingency for one off works when no volunteer service was available to do this (for council tenants only). This contingency would be held by Housing Services who will organise and pay for grass cuts

using internal services only when needed. These figures are based on indicative costs and tenders may come in with lower rates for grass and hedge cuts.

The overall cost also includes provision for a small number of tenants to join the scheme on a discretionary basis via referral to the Housing Estate Manager. The process for doing this will be fully developed but it would allow exceptional cases to join the scheme for example due to financial hardship including severe debt (engagement with debt advice services would be required), medium term incapacity or absence for ill health or disability reasons, cases in the spirit of the Forces covenant e.g. access to war pension or similar. In all cases this will be where the customer does not have anyone who can do this work for them

The contract would be procured for 3 years which would give time to develop alternatives for non qualifying tenants and residents where possible.

This option provides a substantial saving to the HRA and provides a similar service to that delivered previously to tenants who qualify on the age or disability basis on low incomes.

Option C:

Although it would mean the service could continue in it's current form this would not deliver any savings on the HRA which would have to be found elsewhere within the services provided by Housing. It would also not link directly in to the Handypersons scheme and the potential benefits to be gained from this.

Council Plan

7. This proposal contributes to key council priorities:

A) A focus on frontline services – to ensure all residents, particularly the least advantaged can access reliable services and community facilities

This will be achieved by ensuring bigger budget savings to core housing services are avoided which would affect all customers including the most vulnerable.

B) A council that listens to residents – to ensure it delivers the services they want and works in partnership with local communities.

This will be achieved by working with communities and other organisations to provide the proposed scheme and developing other options and alternatives to the current scheme in the longer term.

Implications

8.

- **Financial** - Savings would have to be taken from other (core) housing services if not agreed. This proposal will deliver a saving of £46k on the overall budget of £96k.
- **Human Resources (HR)** - none
- **Equalities** – Customers will be provided with information on how they can get help with keeping their garden in good shape where they don't qualify, there is also a discretionary element to the scheme for exceptional / hardship cases and customers not qualifying have option of purchasing the service at the contractors stated rate.
- **Legal** - none
- **Crime and Disorder** - none
- **Information Technology (IT)** - none
- **Property** - none
- **Other** - none

Risk Management

9. Untidy / overgrown gardens – non qualifying customers may not be able to keep on top of gardens themselves and will need to seek alternative means. Housing staff will be able to provide advice on options available. The council's tenancy requires that customers keep their gardens tidy.

Contact Details

Author

Denis Southall
Head of Housing
Health, Housing and Adult
Social Services
Tel No.01904 551298

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Tom Brittain
Assistant Director, Housing and
Community Safety

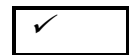
**Report
Approved**



Date 1/11/2017

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

None

Annexes

Annex A – Garden Maintenance Focus Groups
Annex B – Handyperson Service
Annex C – Community Impact Assessment

Abbreviations:

GAS Garden Assistance Scheme
HRA Housing Revenue Account

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Garden Maintenance Focus Groups

All tenants who receive the Garden Maintenance service were asked for their thoughts on the following questions:

- Would you be prepared to pay £2.25 per week for the service?
- Would this be better as an annual charge of £117?
- If this cost is too high, how much could you pay?

They were either sent a letter with a freepost envelope for their response or they were invited to attend one of two focus group meetings at West Offices.

Of the 422 tenants who use the gardening maintenance service:

- 316 were asked to give their thoughts
- 50 were invited to a meeting on 17 May
- 56 were invited to a meeting on 19 May

Response:

- 67 tenants rang
- 133 tenants returned their feedback letter
- 1 tenant 'dropped in' to West Offices
- 5 tenants emailed
- 1 tenant attended the meeting on 17 May
- 1 tenant attended the meeting on 19 May

A response of 49.2%

All comments are included in the notes attached.

Summary

176 of the 208 responses gave their views on paying £2.25 per week, 32 gave comments only.

Of the 176:

- 44% (77) would or could pay
- 56% (99) wouldn't or couldn't pay

Many of those who wouldn't / couldn't pay told us how much they were willing / able to pay:

- 57% nothing
- 9% £2.00
- 6% £1.00
- 6% £1.50
- 3% £100 per year
- 2% £1.25
- 2% £10 per cut
- 2% £13.50 per year
- 2% £5.00 per month
- 1% £15.00 per year
- 1% £2.25 per cut
- 1% £25.00 per year
- 1% £40 – 50 per year
- 1% £50 per year
- 1% £50 – 60 per year
- 1% £60 per year
- 1% £70 per year
- 1% £80 per year
- 1% suggested charging individual amounts (based on the work done and the individual circumstances)

The Handyperson service is advertised to citizens of York as follows:

We can carry out small repairs and odd jobs around your home.



If you are finding it difficult to hang a picture, or even change a light bulb, we can help you out. The old phrase “no job too small” really is what we’re all about.

Our Handypersons regularly do the following for our customers:

- Change light bulbs
- Fit door bells
- Secure loose carpets or rugs around the home (but not fit carpet)
- Supply and fit door locks
- Supply and fit Key safes
- Supply and fit plastic and metal grab rails
- Supply and fit handrails

Our Handypersons are Occupational Trusted Assessors, meaning they are qualified and trained to an accredited standard to be able to determine the most appropriate position for fixed pieces of equipment in your home.

We have to charge for any materials we use, though as a non-profit organisation this is usually at cost.

The Specification says:

1 PURPOSE OF THE SCHEME

1.1 The aim of this service is to provide handyperson services to York residents that are on a low income and not able to carry out the tasks themselves due to frailty or physical disability.

1.2 The service is designed to maximise the opportunities for older people, people with physical disabilities and people with learning disabilities to maintain their tenancy.

The provider should prioritise tasks based on the priority bands indicated below. The tasks this service should offer are:

Priority level 1 - Fall prevention

- Repairing frayed carpets
- Changing light bulbs
- Fitting and replacing batteries in smoke & Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Telephone extension cables
- Removing and replacing curtains so they can be cleaned
- Changing fuses

Priority level 2 - Security

The service could provide improvements including:

- door chains

- bolts
- spy holes
- key safes
- door locks etc

If there is a Cat 1 Health and Safety risk then the provider should ensure the customer is aware of the access to Home Safety Loans (or Home Appreciation loans for larger pieces of work), subject to availability.

Priority level 3 - Improving quality of life

- Fitting loud door bells
- General garden maintenance (no more than 6 times a year per person) *
- Decorating (no more than one room a year per person)*

* The service can only allocate a maximum of one gardening and one decorating job per week.

Any gardening and decorating tasks need to first be allocated to any volunteer, time bank or social enterprise if provision is available.

Other

- Ensuring the Home Service Directory is made available to customers.
- Providing a H&S assessment of the property that uses some criteria from HHSRS standards

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SECTION 1: CIA SUMMARY
Community Impact Assessment: Summary
1. Name of service, policy, function or criteria being assessed:

Tendering the Garden Assistance Scheme (GAS) as part of the Handyperson Service

2. What are the main objectives or aims of the service/policy/function/criteria?

The GAS provides elderly and disabled council tenants unable to do grass and hedge cuts with that service where they have nobody to do this for them

The service is to be tendered as part of the Handyperson Scheme which provides free labour on odd jobs for elderly / vulnerable customers and helps facilitate hospital discharge and prevent falls amongst other things

The proposal will help deliver savings required on the Housing Revenue Account whilst combining the two schemes through tapping in to volunteering resources.

The GAS service will be means tested where it has not been previously.

3. Name and Job Title of person completing assessment:

Denis Southall, Head of Housing

4. Have any impacts been Identified? (Yes/No)

Yes

Community of Identity affected:

Age / Disability

Summary of impact:

The following positive impacts have been identified.

Some customers will not qualify with the new criteria which targets this service at those in this category who are on means tested benefits. This scheme helps those customer keep on top of their garden free of charge which is also a requirement of the tenancy agreement. Non qualifying customers can buy the service at the contractors stated rate..

5. Date CIA completed: 08.11.17

6. Signed off by:



7. I am satisfied that this service/policy/function has been successfully impact assessed.

Name: Tom Brittain

Position: Assistant Director, Housing & Community Safety

Date: 07.11.17

8. Decision-making body:

Date:

Decision Details:

Send the completed signed off document to ciasubmission@york.gov.uk It will be published on the intranet, as well as on the council website.

Actions arising from the Assessments will be logged on Verto and progress updates will be required

Community Impact Assessment (CIA)

Community Impact Assessment Title:

Re-tendering of the Garden Assistance Scheme (GAS) as part of the Handyperson Service

What evidence is available **to suggest that the proposed service, policy, function or criteria could have a negative (N), positive (P) or no (None) effect** on quality of life outcomes? (Refer to guidance for further details)

Can negative impacts be justified? **For example: improving community cohesion; complying with other legislation or enforcement duties; taking positive action to address imbalances or under-representation; needing to target a particular community or group e.g. older people.** NB. Lack of financial resources alone is NOT justification!

Community of Identity: Age

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
			Positive	
	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
	Not applicable	Not applicable		

Community of Identity: Carers of Older or Disabled People

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Gardens overgrown as a result of age, infirmity or inability to pay for gardening services		Standard of living and ability to enjoy amenity of garden	P	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
Will help in overall caring duties where no other person is available to do grass / hedge cuts and odd jobs			Denis Southall	April 2018

Community of Identity: Disability

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
As above		Standard of living & Health	Positive	
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
	Not applicable	Not applicable		

Community of Identity: Gender

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Not applicable		Not applicable	None	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group.				

Community of Identity: Gender Reassignment

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Not applicable		Not applicable	None	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group.				

Community of Identity: Marriage & Civil Partnership

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Not applicable		Not applicable	None	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group.				

Community of Identity: Pregnancy / Maternity

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Not applicable		Not applicable	None	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group.				

Community of Identity: Race

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Not applicable		Not applicable	None	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group.				

Community of Identity: Religion / Spirituality / Belief

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Not applicable		Not applicable	None	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group.				

Community of Identity: Sexual Orientation

Evidence		Quality of Life Indicators	Customer Impact (N/P/None)	Staff Impact (N/P/None)
Not applicable		Not applicable	None	None
Details of Impact	<i>Can negative impacts be justified?</i>	Reason/Action	Lead Officer	Completion Date
There is not expected to be either a positive or negative impact on this community of identity group.				